

USERS' EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

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This past year has seen both challenges and fantastic new opportunities for the user community at the NSLS.

The fantastic new opportunities are clear and abundant. We now have a five-year strategic plan for new development and continued operation of the NSLS. The NSLS continues to be an extremely productive facility, and the UEC is delighted at how NSLS Chair Chi-Chang Kao has consulted widely within the user community to develop a five-year plan for strategic upgrades and continued operation of the facility. The NSLS-II project, led by Associate Lab Director Steve Dierker, has done very well in its Department of Energy (DOE) reviews and will hopefully soon receive Critical Decision-1 (CD-1) approval, which in DOE lingo gives a go-ahead to launch the detailed design of the facility.

We also held the first joint user meeting between the NSLS and Brookhaven's Center for Functional Nanomaterials (CFN), for which the building is near completion. The joint user meeting is an important step toward the close collaboration of the two facilities. The CFN, led by Emilio Mendez, promises to provide capabilities and research foci that are complementary to those at the NSLS.

Together, all of these developments give a clear path to an exciting future of synchrotron radiation research at Brookhaven!



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However, with opportunities come challenges! One of the largest of these faced in the past year involved congressional support for scientific research in general, and DOE user facilities in particular. As you likely know, Congress did not complete its usual budget process in 2006, with the exceptions of the departments of Defense and Homeland Security. This left science funding at the budget levels enacted in late 2005 for FY2006, and unfortunately, FY2006 was not a particularly memorable vintage for science support. The good news is that you, the user community, have spoken up with unprecedented vigor about this, and Congress appears to be listening. As we look at the FY2007 budget and the years to follow, we need to continue to educate our elected representatives about the benefits that are provided to our society and our economy by scientific investigation including research done at DOE user facilities like the NSLS.

We face another interesting challenge as the NSLS-II project progresses: the formation of scientific research teams associated with particular beamlines at the new facility. In early 2007, the final draft of the conceptual design report will be available, which will describe the projected capabilities of NSLS-II, and we can expect a workshop in mid-2007 to launch the process leading to letters of intent for beamlines. This process will include lots of discussion about access modes, as we seek ways to allow scientific and technical innovators from the user community to play significant roles at NSLS-II.

Let us rise to the challenges to fully realize the opportunities!